Dublin Core Metadata Element Set

Each element is described in detail below, including its mandatory status and whether or not it can be repeated. The Dublin Core standard as promoted by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI, http://www.dublincore.org/) does not specify required elements and labels every field as repeatable. In an effort to promote quality metadata creation, however, the NCDC working group considered how essential each of the DC elements is and if the ability to repeat a given field is important. The result is that, in the NC ECHO Implementation of Dublin Core, certain fields have been identified as required and/or repeatable.

Following the description of each element, available refinements and schemes (with corresponding codes) are listed. Finally, input guidelines are detailed for creating the content of the particular element. These guidelines are a work in progress, and input from a variety of institutions as to how they are meeting or not meeting individual institution's needs are requested.

If an institution is using a particular scheme, NC ECHO would like to present that scheme with these guidelines so that other institutions can consider it for use. Institutions willing to share their scheme implementations should forward the schemes and a description of how they are used to NC ECHO for inclusion in these guidelines. Please contact the NC ECHO Metadata Coordinator (kwisser@unc.edu) with suggested additions to the **scheme** lists.

These input guidelines are meant to be helpful rather than confusing; therefore, if there is any point at which there is confusion in the application of a particular element, please contact the NC ECHO Metadata Coordinator immediately. This will result not only in better metadata application in your institution, but more clearly written guidelines and overall improved metadata creation.

In many cases, we have relied upon well-established content guidelines from the library cataloging community as represented by the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd Edition* (AACR2) or archival description standards as represented by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS). Museum metadata content (as represented by the related document *NC ECHO Museum Core)* are based upon the new content standard *Cataloging Cultural Objects* (CCO). A crosswalk to NCDC elements is included in those guidelines. If there are content guidelines currently in use in a particular institution, please convey that information to the NC ECHO Metadata Coordinator. As new content guidelines are formulated or received from institutions, they will be incorporated into these Dublin Core Implementation Guidelines.

Complete record examples appear at the end of the element guidelines. These examples come from cultural institutions in North Carolina and are illustrative of the principles covered in the individual element structures. It should be noted that all examples include the required fields, but optional fields are only included where appropriate.

An ancillary document has been created (http://www.ncecho.org/ncdc/COCEancillarystandard.htm) for the description on digital projects at the project level. Included is element-specific guidelines and an example of that description for a digital project.